

PRIVATE FLYING

COMFORT FROM ITALY : Inside the four-seater cabin of the Breda 79 S. A special effort has been made to provide plenty of room and effective adjustability for the seats. Since the majority of Continental pilots fly with parachutes, both the doors and the cabin top have been designed so that they can, in emergency, be simultaneously removed by the movement of a single control. The width of the doors, incidentally, is notable. The 79 S cruises at 150 m.p.h. on 200 h.p.



Topics of the Day

Going Layman

WHENEVER flying people get together and talk about such things as subsidies it is always difficult for them to remember that they are speaking as enthusiasts and not as members of the general public. The latter can rarely be encouraged to think of flying training in terms other than of its value for military purposes. In other words, the pill of club subsidies must be sugared with the "reserve of pilots" argument.

The fact is, of course, that, as amateur pilots we simply want flying to be cheaper and the average club member or private owner does not often consider himself in the light of common cannon fodder. He or she feels, in some vague fashion, that flying is just a good thing.

Of course it is a good thing, but when one is faced with an argumentative group of lay people it is very difficult indeed to produce convincing arguments in favour, for instance, of the subsidisation of private owners. One's opponents argue, not unnaturally, that we might fairly provide it also for the owners of horses and motor cars.

Not long ago I was discussing the subsidy business with two very keen amateur pilots and, once we had removed our tinted spectacles, we found it very difficult indeed to find a good reason for financial support for anybody but the young man of real war-time value.

Plain Words

PROBABLY it is only plain fear which has driven the tax-paying public to view aviation subsidies with reasonable calm. Until the comparatively recent war scare it was difficult to obtain enough money for essential transport services, and it was probably only the persistent energy of the late Sir Sefton Brancker which made it possible for the clubs to be started at all.

Only the other day I received a letter from South Africa enclosing a cutting from a newspaper in which the whole matter was dealt with in a depressingly sensible way. The writer correctly accused amateur pilots of seeing the flying business not coolly and prosaically, but ardently as a "cause." He explained that motor vehicles would play a very important part in any future war, and that (speaking from South Africa, of course) there were more horses in the Defence Force than there were aeroplanes. Many people would be delighted to be taught to drive and to be given a certain amount of free motoring annually at the expense of the State, and many people would be equally gratified if they could be taught to play polo.

The writer of the article rather sensibly suggested that flying might be made less expensive through a relaxation of the regulations, and through some control over what he alludes to as "excessive servicing charges." Over here we can only suggest that the petrol tax might be removed, but

if that was done there would be an exceptionally loud cry from motoring and road transport interests. Our only reply in this case is to the obvious effect that aeroplanes are not at present using the roads for which the tax was originally levied; their further reply will be that the petrol tax does not go to road development but to the subsidisation of tramp steamers and wealthy amateur pilots.

If there is going to be any subsidy at all I still firmly believe that suitably planned assistance for the private owner would do more to encourage post-graduate flying than anything else. In the meantime, the clubs are feeling the draught, and the next move is surely to bring them in some way into the Reserve scheme.

Oversea

EVER since I first made a timid and inaccurate excursion more than two miles away from the home aerodrome boundary I have taken the simpler forms of navigation rather seriously. There was certainly a slight set-back in my enthusiasm for the rigid adherence to compass courses when I was forced to fly for the first time in really bad weather and under a low ceiling, but in the general way I still believe that properly planned navigation is essential for safe and comfortable passages from here to there.

Never is the importance of working out, for instance, an approximate time of arrival more pronounced than during a sea crossing, however short, in conditions of poor visibility. If no time-of-flight is calculated and no time taken on leaving the coast, it is impossible to have the least idea when a landfall may be expected. The result is that one starts to panic much too early.

The word navigation, in this case, only means the use of a plain proportional calculator. I met a pilot only last week who, while on his way to the Isle of Man, had turned back to the mainland because green fields did not appear below his engine cowling quite as soon as he had expected. Actually he was probably dead on his track and had simply not given himself enough time to reach his objective. After discussion of this episode he admitted that he never looked at his watch and had merely felt that he had been flying over dank and dismal sea for an over-long time.

If you work out an E.T.A. and add, say, two or three minutes to this figure, at least it is possible to maintain some mental balance until it is a proved fact that a small point of landfall has been completely missed. Personally, I hate sea and that makes me feel all the more cautious and careful about the mathematics.

INDICATOR